

October 24, 2014

The Honorable Maria Contreras-Sweet  
SBA Administrator  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd St, SW  
Washington DC 20416

The Honorable Winslow Sargeant  
Chief Council for Advocacy  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd St, SW  
Washington DC 20416

Dear Administrator Contreras-Sweet and Chief Council Sargeant,

The undersigned fishing and seafood organizations write with strong concerns over your opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed clean water protection rule. We represent businesses that supply fish and seafood to America's tables every day. We know the importance of sustainability firsthand: our livelihoods are inextricably linked to the health of the marine environment. When water pollution or drainage of wetlands and tributary streams harms aquatic life and harvest rates, our businesses ultimately pay the price. EPA's Clean Water Protection Rule helps to avoid these risks by restoring longstanding water quality protections that have been under-enforced for nearly a decade due to legal uncertainty.

Our businesses rely on healthy marine life, and marine life requires clean water. When pollution degrades our aquatic resources, we see the effects in our bottom line. Algal blooms, fueled by pollution in some areas, have tainted seafood with toxins that are unsafe to eat. Moreover, these events can cause consumers to avoid seafood even after it is once again safe to eat.

The Clean Water Act was intended to help prevent pollution from entering many waterways where we fish and harvest. Yet recently, the Act's scope of protection has been cast into doubt by a set of ambiguous court decisions. This has resulted in significant backsliding in water quality as legal uncertainty has prevented the effective enforcement of legal protections. In many cases, direct discharges or destruction of nutrient-filtering wetlands has taken place even in waters that should rightfully be protected by the law.

EPA's proposed rule is designed to address this problem. By clearly signaling which waters are protected and which waters are not, the rule will once again allow EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to administer the law with clarity, certainty and efficiency. Better enforcement of Clean Water Act protections is essential if we are to reverse our nation's persistent coastal and inland water pollution.

Our organizations support EPA's proposed clean water rule and object to your characterization of it. Delaying or weakening the rule will allow polluters to continue increasing risks to our businesses. By protecting clean water, this rule protects our businesses and the safe and healthy seafood that Americans love. We therefore urge you to support a strong, science-based rule that will protect water quality for our industries and the nation.

Sincerely,

Golden Gate Salmon Association

Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations

CC: The Honorable Gina McCarthy, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Member of Congress

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Member of Congress